

Serial No.: 09/978,218

REMARKS

1. Claims 1, 3 and 4 remain pending in this application. Claim 2, directed to a needle, has been cancelled. Claim 3, originally dependent on claim 2, has now been amended to recite an improved method and to depend from method claim 1. Claim 4 has also been amended to recite an improved method. Consequently, all of the remaining claims are method claims.

2. Claims 2-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Schob-5968394. Further, claims 2-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Smith et al.-5701636. Since product-by-process claim 2 has been cancelled, and claims 3 and 4 have been amended to recite an improved method dependent on claim 1, these rejections are no longer applicable, and the rejections may now be withdrawn.

3. Claim 1 has been deemed to be allowable. Since claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1, and all formal requirements appear to have been met, Applicant respectfully solicits a Notice of Allowance at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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